

PETE HAMILL

In my trade, for example, editorial writers were fashioning endorsements of George Bush. The Daily News came out for him yesterday (though tepidly) and others will soon follow. In this city, in this era, such support is truly bizarre. For the past six years, Bush had been the drug czar of the nation. And while he was supposed to be fighting the drugs, they were spreading into every area of our lives. The editorial writers don't mention that. They don't remind us that in his furtive

dealings with Manuel Noriega (first as CIA chief, then as a point man for the contras), Bush looked the other way on the issue of drugs.

At the same time, the police union was lining up behind Bush. Nothing could be more disgusting. If these people would read the history, they would see clearly that drugs have exploded around us while conservatives — not liberals — have been in power. For 16 of the last 20 years, Republicans have held the White House. And while they were obsessed with their anti-communist crusade, drugs came piling into America. It was no accident that they came from what the Republicans call the Free World: Thailand, Pakistan, Turkey, Panama, Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil. All allies. Their leaders knew that if they only chanted the correct words about Karl Marx and V.I. Lenin, everything else was permitted. One result: During the Reagan years, the Medellin cartel became one of the world's most efficient multinational corporations.

But the capacity for self-deception among some Americans seems without limits. When President Zia's airplane exploded, the right-wing ideologues immediately started fashioning the theory of a Soviet plot. Those of us who live in New York imagined a different scenario.

We know from Drug Enforcement Agency reports that 65 percent of this city's heroin supply comes from Pakistan. Bush knows it. The New York police brass know it. They also know that for years, the filthy trade was ignored by the Reagan administration, because Pakistan was the CIA's major support base for the rebels in Afghanistan. So it was decided that fighting a proxy war with the

Russians was more important than death on the streets of New York. That's why, when New Yorkers heard that Zia had been blown up, some of us suspected his rivals in the drug racket. If you think this is preposterous, look at what has been happening in Colombia. Look at what is happening on the streets of New York.

The Washington Post _____
 The New York Times _____
 The Washington Times _____
 The Wall Street Journal _____
 The Christian Science Monitor _____
 New York Daily News _____
 USA Today _____
 The Chicago Tribune _____
 N.Y. Post 4
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But nobody asks Bush about such matters. His handlers have cut him off from interrogation. And Bush does what they tell him to do. He concocts his little sound bites, takes lessons from Roger Ailes in walking and sitting, and leads a grown-up nation to waste an election campaign with questions about the flag. Instead of expressing rage, the editorial writers and the heads of the police unions utter the too-familiar words of anguish for Hoban and Buczek, and then go on to endorse Bush, whose ineptitude and ideological narrowness helped get those young men killed. This is a sickening season.

For make no mistake: Bush is responsible. While Reagan and Bush dozed, the drug kingpins had eight years to get themselves organized. They have created elaborate production systems in a half-dozen countries; they have perfected their distribution system all over the U.S. They've bought their way into banks. They've purchased cops and politicians. And they did it all while Bush was supposed to be fighting them.

That's why it is obscene to mourn these dead young cops and then endorse Bush on the grounds of peace and prosperity. Only one issue truly matters in this city: drugs. And if the cold-eyed killers in the Medellin cartel could vote in our election, they certainly wouldn't want anything to change.

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